The
COMMONWEAL

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Editors: EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.
PHILIP BURNHAM (*now on duty with the armed forces*)
HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor;* MICHAEL WILLIAMS, *Special Editor;* C. G. PAULDING, Literary Editor; JOHN C. CORT, *Associate Editor;* JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager.*

Cairo and Teheran

THE CONTRAST between the Cairo and Teheran declarations seems to point to the two stages into which the United Nations cast this war. At Cairo the statement was much like that at Casablanca, for as little progress has now been registered against Japan as had been achieved against Germany up to that time. Hence a situation believed to call for words of unassailable confidence and loud defiance. The parallel between "Unconditional Surrender" and promising to strip Japan to its 1895 dimensions is obvious. Although this sort of thing may have a good effect on home morale, it is also sure to fire the Germans and the Japanese to a fighting pitch. It would be surprising indeed if any nation would not continue fighting a hopeless war if the only alternative were no less sweeping or no more specific than unconditional surrender. We may be sure that nazi propagandists continue to make the most of the Casablanca phrase. While the ultimate prospect held out to the Japanese at Cairo is equally devastating. All this despite the fact that the last thing we want is to have our adversaries fight on to the last man.

The Teheran statement deals with a later stage in the war. Here one of the principal items on the agenda was the drawing up of the specific coordinated military moves designed to defeat the Germans on the battlefield. The emphasis is different. Instead of a defiant threat of death it is a general promise of abiding peace to all peoples. It holds up a vision of universal peace and security once the enemy's armed forces have been defeated and destroyed.

But it seems a mistake to spend too much time in analyzing the words, phrases, context or even the tone of so generalized a statement. Much of it is open to several varying interpretations. Suffice it to say that the nazis had prepared the German people to expect more fire-breathing than actually resulted. The fact of the Roosevelt-Churchill-Stalin meeting—no matter how inept was the manner in which the news was handed to the American public—is the important thing, as was the meeting with Chiang Kai-shek. From now on there is to be a coordinated battle campaign; henceforth the major war decisions will be joint decisions until victory is achieved. And the making of the peace and its maintenance are each to be definitely joint actions.

Here the important question is whether the new "Big Four" are to be sole judges in these matters or whether the other nations are to have a voice in such decisions. Is the setting up of a joint military staff for invasion operations, and other Big Four or Big Three commissions, simply a means of coordinating military action or is it the beginning of a genuine United Nations Council? In such a council all the allies would be directly represented, would collaborate in making the decisions on this war and the peace to follow. Three or four Great Powers can often settle things with almost as much dispatch as a dictator, but the decisions that are to come out of this war must be arrived at internationally.

What General Smuts Said

THE FEARS of the smaller nations came to the surface when Prime Minister Smuts of South Africa in a more or less impromptu speech before the United Kingdom branch of the Empire Parliamentary Association—in Mr. Churchill's absence—declared that Britain needed new ties in western Europe to build up the balance of power she had lost there. General Smuts is a solitary, domineering type never noted for his tact unless he is in process of getting some measure voted through. His life has been a series of battles, in parliament and in the field. He tends to view things chiefly in terms of power. Yet his very frankness and disregard for the opinions of lesser men often has had its points. The extent to which many in Britain applauded his comments shows that many think of the peace problem in terms of balance of power still. And wittingly or unwittingly he called attention to the fact that France, Belgium, Norway, and other European democracies, also have a

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major rôle to play in the coming peace. Only fragments of his talk were relayed to this country, but his single reference to "the next worldwide British system," of which he thinks the aforementioned countries should be a part, can well provoke constructive thought.

Talk about Germany

RARELY is an American magazine privileged to publish as profound an article as Dorothy Thompson's in the current *Life*. It is profound and yet finely readable and moving. This much must be said because of the strong prejudice which still resides in some minds against Miss Thompson. This article is entitled "Germany—Enigma of the Peace," and represents the author's analysis and solution not only of the German "problem" but also of the European problem. We have ourselves, in these columns, been dealing with this question from diverse points of view for the last several months, starting with an article by J. L. Benvenisti and continuing with the more recent papers by F. A. Hermens and Waldemar Gurian.

Miss Thompson begins by saying: "Whatever is done with Germany will obviously have to be done with the human material which is at hand." She then qualifies this observation: "The Germany of tomorrow will have to be made with or imposed on living Germans—not with Germans who are dead or with Germans not yet born. It is these living Germans, therefore, that concern us." Almost with regret Miss Thompson washes her hands of the "conspiracy interpretation of history," in all its ramifications and manifestations. She then proceeds to an analysis of what the present German generation is. And here is where she does her most brilliant work. She points out that in no country has a generation been so undeceived. "Monarchy was a fraud. Democracy was a fraud. Money was a fraud. National Socialism was a fraud. War was a fraud. No generation has ever tried as many things and been disillusioned in all of them as have the Germans." She points to the fairy story nature of the present war—as far as the Germans were concerned. "It began as a German fairy story, in which principalities and thrones toppled before a mere threat. The British Empire came to Munich like Heinrich to Canossa. In the mind of the German masses all that Germany had lost was to be regained without spilling a drop of blood. This went on for a year. It was followed by another fairy story. Blood would flow, but in limited quantities for fantastic achievements. Campaigns were concluded in three weeks, or six weeks, ending in total victory. Successful adventurism was climaxing an age of adventurism. The whole German people had become successful armed speculators." And now we see the greatest deception of them all raining from British and American bombers, pushing inexorably along the Russian front.

And so "We shall have to deal . . . with an abnormal people; not abnormal because their race made them so, or their history, or Bismarck, Nietzsché, Hegel and Fichte, but abnormal because they have led an abnormal life." We should therefore view the problem as a psychiatrist might view it, in the hope of proposing a new dynamic, which will inspire this disillusioned nation. If we despair over the program and propose a solution of force and bitterness, we shall not "make any political sense. A Germany that has already gone through the experience of the past thirty years, if confronted by such a Carthaginian fate, would be a country that would have an out-and-out nervous breakdown of the most formidable and dangerous proportions." "Now to turn a nation into wild beasts, even wilder beasts than they have been under the regimented bestiality of Hitler's régime, their savagery turned in upon themselves, not even in an organized civil war but in scores of civil wars, does not seem to me a consummation devoutly to be wished, not for Germany's sake, but for the sake of Europe as a whole." Miss Thompson thus generalizes her analysis to take in the whole continent. "The collapse of all old authorities has probably gone much further in Europe than we realize."

Her solution must, of course, be vague. She believes that Europe will want a great deal more unity "than she has had since the eighteenth century" but unity "with equality for all, great and small, with complete cultural freedom, with political sovereignty or states rights in all matters strictly internal, but with a common foreign policy and defense system and an integrated economic order." Into this Germany must be reintegrated. And she ends with a justified indictment: "So far not an official word has been uttered by the leaders of the Anglo-American powers to indicate the slightest acknowledgement that there is a European problem." Such, we believe, is wise and true political thinking.

New Moral Criterion?

FROM an article by Dr. Austin J. App entitled "Presenting Sin and Temptation in Literature" in the December *Catholic World*: "The more immature or primitive people are, the less should sins be dramatized and the more should even the wholesome matters of love and marriage be merely reported romantically. Saying that he and she became engaged to be married is treating the matter in this way. Describing how he put his arms about her, set the ring on her finger, and kissed her, is dramatizing a good thing, which however for people a long way from courtship and engagement will not produce the marriage but may produce the premature kiss."

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American Adam

IF YOU were asleep you would not hear the three blasts from the ship's horn announcing its departure. New York is quiet at night. From three to five in the morning New York is silent the way the countryside is silent: that is to say there are the night sounds in the building, a clock ticks, a man coughs; there are the night sounds in the street, a cab goes by—the way that in the country the cattle stir in the barn at night, the wind sounds in the tree. If you are asleep it does not matter whether there are sounds or not, but if you are awake in New York there will be the charwomen cleaning an office in the building across the way and the light from the office will come into your room as if it were moonlight, the ships will be going down the bay in the moonlight or not, in the dark or in the moonlight the ships will be going down the bay and then they will be meeting the unbroken swell of the ocean. If you are awake in the country there will be the sound of a train somewhere or the sound of a brook and the tracks lead through the night to New York or to San Francisco, the brook leads to a river, the river to the sea.

Americans have climbed onto this continent from the sea. It does not matter when they came or if they have just come and do not speak English. It does not matter whether they had to wade ashore or came down the gangplank with their bundles, whether they came indentured or free. It is of no importance whether the memory of their arrival is fresh in their minds or not. (The classification native or foreign born is convenient for statistics.) None of us can stand at the edge of the Grand Canyon and say there our ancestors lived in caves, there Prometheus found the secret of fire, there lived the Etruscans, the Druids, the Franks, the Goths, the Celts.

We look back as far as we can and the time inevitably comes when we Americans have to follow the trails back from the wilderness, return with the Spaniards to the Atlantic ports, retrace our steps with Daniel Boone, with Lewis and Clark, cross the Donner Pass eastward, drive day after day, week after week in the covered wagons eastward, withdraw the golden spike which marked the completion of the transcontinental railroad, turn the locomotives eastward, abandon California, withdraw with the Mormons from Utah, return to the colonies, change the name back to New Amsterdam, reduce the census from one hundred and thirty millions to a million, to a hundred thousand, abandon Chicago, depopulate the cities, the villages, the farms, look once more at the first American, setting foot for the first time in America, standing for the first time on the American soil of an unnamed continent.

There is no mythology to propose that he came actually out of the sea. No Botticelli has painted an American Venus arising modest and lovely from a sea shell. The first American came from across the seas, from Europe. And even if no other European ever had come to these shores from Europe, even if that first American had been a progenitor like Adam, he would still have implanted in our memories, in the memory of all Americans the unbreakable presence of his own European past. He would have made that past our past. Through him we would have had an atavistic knowledge of the green fields, the orderly roads, the houses built of stone, the tall houses called cathedrals. Through him we would have possessed our language.

The first American did not come here in the stone age; he brought to America the civilizations of Israel, Egypt, Greece and Rome; he brought all that Europe had inherited from the past. He came here in a year of Our Lord; he was detached from a Christian Europe.

If the first American had come from America, we would have been Americans as Africans are Africans. We could have rejected Europe together with everything of the past which formed Europe. We would also have been perfectly free to reject Christianity. Christian missionaries would no doubt eventually have arrived here and, with the persistence they have shown elsewhere, they would have learned enough of our language so that they could state their message. We could have refused that message. But it did not happen that way. We have not been at any time free to ignore the past because at no time has there been any break with the past. The European past, the Christian past. Our own past.

The past does not remain the past; the past merges into the present. The European past and our own past form no more than a moment in the life of Europe and in our life. We in America lead a life in common with the peoples of Europe. That is the way it has always been. The American Revolution did not break our solidarity with Europe—the Risorgimento did not disrupt Italian solidarity with Europe—and we did not even have any foreigners to throw out. There was a time when distance seemed to mean a separation, but the immigrants overcame distance and now there is no distance left to think about.

So that there is absolutely no use in any American's ever trying to say there are all those countries in Europe and we don't speak dutch, we don't speak polski, we don't speak frog and whatever they do or did over there they got us into the war and when we get ourselves out of the war we can forget about them. There is no use for any American to attempt to think that it might be possible to forget about the countries in Europe, to fight the war, win the war, and then forget about the Europeans.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Mediocrity and Sanctity

The function of saints and martyrs

Georges Bernanos*

ENGLISH friends, the most dangerous shortsightedness consists in underestimating the mediocre; mediocrity is a colorless and odorless gas; allow it to accumulate undisturbed, and suddenly it explodes with a force beyond all belief. Many of you are utterly disinterested in the future of Christianity, and such readers will find these pages tedious indeed. Others have no concern except with the external and material indications of its decay; every Sunday they count on their fingers the parishioners present at services. But the dire omen for all of us—yes, for all of us, whether believers or unbelievers—is not that Christians should be less numerous, but that the number of mediocre Christians should increase. Smile, if you like, at mediocre Christians; the power they still can wield is vast.

All the learned academies in the universe could solemnly convene for the purpose of promulgating a new morality; the moment it emerged from their mysterious crucibles, this intellectual elixir would at once begin to lose its potency. . . . Whereas these millions of Christian men and women, were they even more degenerate than they are, would have a real and unquestionable right to a morality so familiar for centuries to all consciences that it has indeed become our conscience; nay, even something more: it has penetrated our subconsciousness; it in some fashion informs our instincts, it has become a morality made flesh. Oh, I know that its precepts are recorded in learned tomes, and that the charity which gives it life ever beats in a certain number of predestined hearts. But all these pious conformists, scattered throughout the world, whom you regard with indifference or irony, if they cannot prevail against the precepts, can very readily in the long run warp their practice and application.

If I may indulge myself in another metaphor, these people have no power over the source of the river, but they securely control its flow. To a believer like myself, this fact has not the importance it should have in the eyes of unbelievers. No sensible citizen, even were he an absolute stranger to all religious dogma, can look with indifference upon a species of men who, since they in large part control the vocabulary of morals, bring weight to bear upon very nearly the sum total of consciences. The least shift in average Christian opinion can have social and cultural consequences of terrible gravity. Is it not such a shift which today threatens to put the genius of France, heir of Hellenic civilization, at the service of an inhuman humanism? You are constantly being told, in the interests of propaganda, that a return to Christian principles would save the world, and proof thereof is supposedly supplied by quoting the sayings of the New Testament. But principles, by themselves, can save no one; principles do not save without men. It seems to me more accurate to say that given a certain amount of shifting, a certain degree of adulteration, good principles will much more surely wreck the world than bad. Believe me or not, as you will! I do not ask you to share my faith. It is for the good of societies now threatened that I beg them to see the danger where it truly lies, not in subversion by the Forces of Evil, but in corruption of the Forces of Good.

Deplorable or not, there is nothing better with which to oppose the new moralities than Christian morality, and you would be quite mistaken if you thought the former can put up no valid arguments against the latter, as though the teachings of the Gospel were mathematical axioms. In many ways, on the contrary, the precepts of the Gospel constitute a paradox, a defiance; and in olden times, such they seemed. The sacredness of the human person is a thesis more difficult to maintain than its opposite, the absolute dependence of the individual upon the community. It appears that in Germany they are beginning to rid themselves of the sick and of the mentally unsound by means of euthanasia. For the same reasons one might also destroy many other less damaged products but products which are likely to cost Society more than they are worth.

For analogous reasons, one might be led to wipe out a certain proportion of the poor, especially those whom a long family history of poverty leaves with little likelihood of being able, through their own resources, to better their lot. After all, this kind of purge of the ill-clad is fully as justified as the purge of the Wrong-Thinking. Were you not Christians, did there not course through your veins the blood of ancient Christianity, such a

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procedure would no more trouble your consciences than the murder of a slave would formerly have upset a citizen of Rome or of Carthage. And if you undertake to conquer this ferocious logic merely with the Letter of the Gospel, my dear friends, you are foredoomed to defeat. The Devil is the greatest of logicians; there is no logic like unto the logic of Hell. Expect, then, no help from the Letter. The Spirit alone can save you.

Believers or unbelievers, every weakening of the Christian spirit is a catastrophe for each one of you. In the face of the peril which threatens us all, we are all in the same boat, we shall save ourselves or we shall perish together. The word *charity* has for many of you perhaps no very precise meaning; no matter. Every particle of Christ's divine charity is today more precious for your security—for *your* security, I say—than all the specie in the vaults of the American government. Without that charity, the Christian masses, seemingly held in such rigid discipline by their pastors—those masses whom you see marching in serried rank at Eucharistic Congresses—would be of little worth in your defense. What they display to you is nothing, less than nothing, a flaccid dough, in which you see not the leaven. You have eyes only for the young blades, the church wardens, the notabilities, the bands and drum corps. Perhaps you may notice that baldachin, richly adorned like a banner, with its plumes and fringes? That also is nothing. Under that baldachin is a tiny white host, certainly invisible from the seat you occupy. Good. Don't expect me now to spread myself in soul-stirring, heart-touching periods; what I think about something which is a thousand times dearer to me than life itself does not concern you; I haven't the least intention of converting you or edifying you; I hope only to make myself understood by every reasonable man, that is, by every man capable of accepting in good faith the results of human experience.

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There is, then, this tiny host. And furthermore there are, lost here and there in this great crowd, people who move along, surely without your noticing them—timid old priests, men, women, little children—whether naughty or not, what matters it! Do not seek them out among those who show the whites of their eyes or swallow their tongues in expressions of ecstasy. What dwells in their hearts rarely betrays itself through their features; moreover, they do not know what they have in their hearts; that, God knows. Between the white host and these human beings, so little worthy the notice of spectators or the camera's lense, there is a mysterious interchange. Here is what matters; I have the honor to assure you, here is what matters. However you may choose to explain the fact, the fact is evident, it has always been evident throughout the centuries. The moment a threat arises, not against the treasures of the Church or its dignities, but against its faith, the poor insignificant wretches I speak of become Martyrs—you know this as well as I do. They quietly say No! to the Powers of this world to whom the very day before they still humbly paid their respects; and, what is more, the No they set up against them is as humble as was the respect they paid them, but it is implacable, unswervable, inexorable.

The sweet obstinacy of these predestinate has caused more blood to flow—their own blood—than all the pride of conquerors. And what is even more surprising—account for it as you will—we then behold the flaccid dough of which they were the leaven work and swell and rise. The bigoted become forgiving and charitable; the miserly become spendthrift; the casuists become as open-hearted as little children; the cautious gladly take risks; political prelates lose their guile; and the tyrants, masters of palances and kingly chambers paved in gold, suddenly dumbfounded, anguished, terrified, hear the old Church now rejuvenated singing in the depths of the catacombs.

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Oh, I ask your pardon! You have every right to reprove me for this lyric strain—since it is not at all the poet in you whom I seek to move. I could just as well have said it more simply: only in days of trial does Christianity yield the precise measure of its strength. Not that adversity gives it strength, but rather that adversity once again sets everyone in his proper place, with the saints at the forefront of all. Hence I have the right to conclude that if, in the face of the peril which threatens the world, you are perfectly entitled to use the Church—the Church is at the service of all; she contemplates with Mary, she does not disdain with Martha to bake the bread of the poor—there is no need for you to wish her the persecution which makes her divine—such a wish would scarcely be charitable—but it is absolutely necessary that you wish her heroes and saints.

The Church is a great temporal power, true enough. You avidly count up the number of her militants, of her propaganda organizations, of her newspapers, of her avowed or secret political influence, of her vast resources. All this is, of course, far from negligible; but for this you will pay too high a price, you will be cheated. Whoever undertakes to make use of the Church for realistic ends, in a spirit of realism, will always get the worst of the bargain. Precisely to the extent that you think you have secured her to yourself by means of smart trading, you separate her from that which constitutes her real power. Here, I repeat, is no question of mysticism but of hard experience. Never have the clerical factions among

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us had at their disposal more potent weapons than they had throughout the last years preceding the outbreak of this war. They had a hand in everything, as the saying goes. And how many hands they had! The forthcoming liquidation of their childish national revolution will demonstrate to you that I was right not to take a penny on their chances.

I thoroughly understand the reasoning of realistic policies. It in no way proposes to establish a Christian society; it merely expects Christians to defend its own society. It assumes that the millions of parishioners bedecked with blue, yellow, green, red ribbons and posted in line by the Jesuit Fathers will furnish it with excellent recruits. A desperate mistake, my dear friends. The characteristically human value of these parishioners is very much lower than you esteem it. Allow me again to inform you that a mediocre Christian is a very indifferent sort of fellow, generally inferior to no matter what unbeliever of comparable status, for he finds himself in contradiction to the truth he professes, and he can only resolve such a contradition by casuistry and feigning. You count upon him to defend our society, and he reasons after the same pattern: he counts on your society to defend him. You are each other's dupes, because each of you hopes to give much less than he will receive. In short, collaboration with the Church is for the realist a Last Resort, whereas collaboration with the realists is for the Church a Lesser Evil. And this spectacle is one of the most bitterly comic History has ever witnessed.

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English friends, at last I am coming to the end of my lengthy message. I send it to you, like the others, from the depths of my solitude. And when I speak to you, I speak to my own; I can only hope that you—you who are free—will transmit it to the remaining free men in my country. If I were dwelling among you, perhaps I should not have dared to write it. Here are pages and pages wherein the subject carried me further than I would have gone of my own accord, but what is written will remain written; I shall not go back on it. You have not been reading a bill of particulars or a brief of anything else in some conventional rhetorical form. Yet if I am not to survive my nation's disaster long enough to see the day of justice dawn, at least you will have heard the death-rattle of a French conscience.

Englishmen, you would perhaps greatly like to believe, in the veiled hope of reassuring yourselves about the future, that our universal plight is the work of a small number of individuals, as political and worldly chit-chat constantly informs you. Or else, as the oracles in prophetic guise would have it, this calamity has deep moral causes, so deep that then and there you judge it useless to accompany these gentlemen in their profound investigations. As far as I am concerned, I have had my fill of gossip and rumor; I have had more than my fill of academic dissertations larded with terms which mean nothing to the populace and which give one the illusion that the fate of the world is presently being determined in philosophic congresses.

Oh English! Oh my English friends! may you listen to the appeal of a simple man, who owes his little modicum of insight to loyalty and love. Do not pity France! "I want none of your pity," she will tell you, "not because it humiliates me but because it makes you run the danger of going astray." Englishmen, Englishmen, don't think that you are quit of this catastrophe because of your pity; understand the lesson it teaches you. As long as I live, I shall repeat that my country's moral defeat must be blamed upon those who were the natural guardians of its conscience, and the proof that they went bankrupt is that we see them cynically exploiting that bankruptcy to their own profit. The same breed of men will tomorrow exploit your victory. Suppose a miracle, or some unforeseeable event—the stroke of genius of a military chieftain, the discovery of some engineer, anything you like—had last year won us the victory; those same élites who call themselves "national," those "right-thinking" bourgeois, those generals, those admirals, those members of the Academy, those Archbishops who today would have us look upon Mr. Hitler as the providential instruments for avenging them, would then be strutting about panoplied in our honor just as they now strut panoplied in our shame. For months now, English friends, the leaders of the democracies freely talk about Christian principles. May they distrust principles! Our élites had principles, they crawled with principles as a corpse crawls with maggots.

Be not surprised that a Catholic talks to you in such fashion; it is precisely because I am a Catholic that I do so. My Church is the Church of the Saints. The cult of the Saints scandalizes many of you, who believe them the prisoners of the Church. Rather, it is the Church who is their prisoner, their royal prisoner. Living, they gave everything. Dead, they create for the Church a living tradition, they are her witnesses and her judges. It was a mere pastime for the Doctors of the Law, the Scribes and the Pharisees to overwhelm Jeanne d'Arc with their dialectic. But they are dead, whereas their victim is ever living, truly living, beyond the possibility of life and honor being denied her. Today she is much more embarrassing to their eminences Cardinals Baudrillard and Gerlier than she would have been embarrassing to them of old, at Rouen; and I need not tell you why. To the least sentence spoken by this frail daughter of Lorraine, obstinate like all

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who belong to her race, by this diminutive page boy of the Lord, truly as bold as a page boy—one would not dare say brash—whose every action, whose every word constituted a defiance to the Wise, to the Prudent, to the Politician—to her least sentence we now find the Wisest of the Wise, the most Political among the Politicians—I mean the Churchmen—through a solemn, irrevocable promotion attaching a supernatural value, a doctrinal value—to the least sentence fallen from her lips, which the clerks at her trial have transmitted to us across the centuries. Not that she was learned enough, poor girl, to define the Fatherland, Honor, an Oath, a Just War, but the Doctors who nowadays undertake to define such matters cannot avoid writing as though in her presence, under that same proud, innocent, slightly mocking glance which formerly she bestowed upon her judges. Do you understand all that? Those among us who henceforth would venture certain justifications of defeatism, buttressing themselves upon the continuingly mysterious words of the Gospel, "Those who live by the sword shall perish by the sword," should first of all begin afresh the Rouen trial; and that they no longer can do. Our Church is the Church of the Saints.

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Englishmen! Americans! Christians of the Reformed Religion, it is true enough that from afar our Church looks like any other human institution; old age and the spirit of old age seem as powerful within her as elsewhere. Disabuse yourselves. Our Church is indeed the only one in which childhood is not the ward of old age, but rather the aged are the wards of the children. Is it not stirring to think that even today, when my country's Church more than ever yields herself to the cold speculations of senile prudence, she at the same time exalts to such heights two young girls—Saint Joan of Arc and Saint Theresa of Lisieux?

Pillar of Democracy

The meaning of the fight against the FSA

Rural Observer

THERE'S more than meets the eye to this fight continuation of the Farm Security Administration, something more significant than the loan of a few million dollars to small farmers who can translate credit into food. The stuff that goes into the *Congressional Record,* the primed publicity releases, the sonorous statements that find their way into homes via the radio, the high-sounding resolutions passed by pressure groups are merely sound effects of a titanic battle for the future of rural America. Upon the outcome depends America's agricultural economy, social structure and, to a great extent, even our philosophy of life.

What is this agency, which for two years has taken the brunt of buffeting directed at the Administration and which continues to fight against political powers that have proven insuperable against every other victim? On the surface Farm Security makes loans to small farmers—owners, tenants, and workers—who cannot get fair credit elsewhere. But it means much more than that. It signifies democracy's faith in the ability of its humblest citizens to regain their lost social status, to become part of the nation, to walk with heads erect as free men. Many borrowers were buried under hopeless burdens of debt, disease, superstition, disillusionment and fear, when Farm Security found them.

Even the New Deal in its most liberal days might not have undertaken the job of rehabilitating these forgotten folk if it realized the immensity of the task. Farm Security had no more than scratched the social surface of the rehabilitation problem before it realized that the roots of neglect were deep. Here was no mere credit problem. Relief could not cure the disease. The scars of human erosion, which were cut deep during decades of carelessness, would take a long time to heal.

Farm Security found first that people will work only when there is something to work for. It learned that these people were loathe to turn a hand unless they could see some way eventually of getting out of debt. They weren't going to work the rest of their lives for creditors and leave a legacy of indebtness to their heirs. So FSA set up a division of debt adjustment specialists who worked with creditors, debtors and committees of local citizens for voluntary reductions and extensions that would give hope to creditor and debtor alike. With some prospect of becoming solvent again, farmers went back to work.

Rusty on their farm techniques because they lived in the backhill areas where technical information on modern farm practices seldom penetrates, and ignored by Extension Service agents concerned only with big growers, borrowers had to have

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expert supervision. FSA gave this through county supervisors familiar with good farm management practices. Home management specialists taught farm wives how to grow gardens of nourishing food, how to produce their own milk, meat, eggs, how to can and dry and preserve food for family use, how to add a touch here and there that would transform a desolate dwelling into a comfortable home. Borrowers were shown how to keep books and records and how to review them to find where they had spent too much or grown too little. Because this class of farmer traditionally had been unable to pay for the scant medical attention it received, medical societies generally were glad to cooperate in a plan under which low-income farmers within a county pooled their medical expenses and pro-rated them monthly in payment for far better medical care than they had ever enjoyed.

But small farmers, purchasing at retail prices their feed, seed, fertilizer, machinery and equipment, still couldn't compete with larger operators who bought these cheap in large lots for cash. Cooperatives were the answer. Wherever it was possible, FSA made loans to borrowers to join existing cooperatives. Where there were no cooperatives that fulfilled borrowers' needs, FSA helped them form co-ops of their own. Through co-ops, decent sanitary facilities were built; windows screened; wells covered; mattress materials and a thousand and one small home-making essentials were purchased.

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Even FSA officials were surprised with the results of the first few years of rehabilitation. Children who formerly didn't have decent clothes now went to church and to school dressed like other children. Men and women once regarded as shiftless took a new pride in their farm operations, their habits and homes; and they began to take part in community affairs. They even began to vote. And this made some politicians thoughtful.

The cost of rehabilitation was negligible. As a matter of fact it was a saving to the taxpayer. Pre-war cost of FSA per year per family was $72, including administrative and supervisory expenses and losses on loans. FSA families were getting on their feet again and began contributing taxes toward the upkeep of their communities. The cost of rural relief, on the other hand, was $350 per year per family, and it was sterile of rehabilitation. When war came, FSA loan repayments at maturity soared from 76 cents on the dollar to more than 90 cents, and administrative and supervisory expenses were cut considerably. FSA services in 1940, including all expenses cost less than six per cent of the loans outstanding; in 1941 they cost less than five. At present costs are down, and FSA is collecting between 25 and 50 per cent more than last year on current and old loans.

It took the fires of war to test the true temper of FSA and its small farmers. With ample labor in their own large families, with their cooperatives enabling them to share rationed machinery and scarce equipment, with much land idle, small farmers and small farmers alone could expand production. At the end of 1942, after one year of war, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics found that FSA farmers throughout the nation had increased milk production 20 per cent as compared with 3 per cent generally; eggs 31 per cent as compared with 15 per cent generally; chickens 36 per cent as compared with 14; beef 38 per cent against the general 7; dry beans 29 as against 6.

FSA had helped only 7.6 per cent of the nation's farmers that year; but that 7.6 per cent had supplied 38 per cent of the nation's increase in milk. Even more ambitious production plans were made for 1943.

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In the face of such results, who could oppose FSA? Why would they want to frustrate these small farmers who were producing the foods needed so tragically by a world at war? Who conceivably could want to drive millions of men, women and children back into the morass of debt, disease, indolence and ignorance from which they were emerging? Why?

Among the most powerful of the political pressure groups in Washington is the American Farm Bureau Federation. This group at this writing is dominated by Edward A. O'Neal, president, plantation owner and longtime lobbyist for industrial interests. O'Neal has continued as federation *fuehrer,* despite the fact that for years he has worked consistently against the interests of operators of small and moderately-sized farms and has time and again put over legislation that benefited cotton planters to the detriment of dirt farmers generally. A master at dispensing favors or paralyzing with fear his subservient directorate, he has, until now, maintained his position as spokesman for the federation. His policies of wartime scarcities, greed, inflation and class-hatred have turned the stomachs of many men active in Farm Bureau affairs, but none has led a rebellion against him with any permanent effect.

To give the devil his due, O'Neal has turned many a neat trick in promoting his organization. He has captured the federally-operated Extension Service, for instance, and prostituted it by states and in counties, to his own political lust. By contributing a million dollars of Farm Bureau funds and supplementing Extension's $19,000,000 annual federal appropriation and normal educational powers with still more Government money and authority, O'Neal made Extension Service in most parts of the nation a powerful procurer for the political house he runs. Extension conducted his

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Farm Bureau membership campaigns by using their Government frank to distribute his gospel; Extension loaned their employes as Farm Bureau promotion speakers; Extension carried O'Neal's fight against the Government—his anti-labor hatreds, his soak-the-poor taxation and help-the-rich wage policies, his threats of wartime agricultural strikes, his blasts at Government agencies—right down to the rural level. Here and there, on some issues, Extension's state directors and even county agents refused to serve their master. They were a minority; but they maintained what integrity Extension Service has left.

It is an anomaly that pennies from the poor, contributed by unwilling sharecroppers to the Farm Bureau, were used by O'Neal for their own destruction. Not infrequently southern tenant farmers and sharecroppers — despite their protests—had their Farm Bureau dues deducted from their income by landlords. Part of these dues went toward O'Neal's salary and travel expenses incurred in his campaign of bombast against the only agency in the Government which offered small farmers a modest measure of security. It is to the shame of FSA that many of its county supervisors encouraged FSA borrowers to become members of the Farm Bureau as a step in their social rehabilitation.

The National Cotton Council, of course, echoed O'Neal's sentiments. Some spokesmen for the US Chamber of Commerce paid off old obligations to O'Neal by following his recommendations. Here and there the Grange took a swipe at FSA and its small farmers, but more often local leaders were inclined to protect both agency and farmers.

When it came to a showdown, however, it was O'Neal's old ally, the American Bankers Association, which buried the knife in the back of America's small farmers. The ABA did this expertly, in the dark, quietly, efficiently. It may even be that those who were struck will die before they know what has hit them.

On July 22, 1943, A. L. M. Wiggins, chairman of the ABA Committee on Federal Legislation, addressed a brief letter to member banks asking that its instructions be passed along "to the officer of the bank who is most interested in: (1) Federal legislation; (2) Government competition with private credit; (3) Preserving private enterprise; or (4) Direct personal action on the legislative front." This letter instructed local bank officers to contact each of the 435 representatives and 96 Senators while they were home on Summer holiday and have them legislate during the coming session to the satisfaction of the American Bankers Association. The letter was a masterpiece. Here are extracts from it:

> The ABA can do certain things in Washington such as: Secure the introduction of bills; combat Congressional committees, administrative agencies and so forth. There is one thing it cannot do—it cannot contact a majority of the 435 representatives and the 96 members of the Senate on a legislative proposal. That is the job that only you folks back home can do. On banking legislation it is a job that only you and the other bankers can do.
>
> The winter session of Congress probably will witness a show-down on the question of Government subsidized and socialized credit. How your Senators and Representatives vote on legislation involving these issues may be determined by the information and viewpoint that you and other bankers give them this summer. As chairman of your committee on Federal legislation, I am calling on you to perform that service for chartered banking and to do it now.
>
> Two major fights in the field of agricultural credit are just ahead. One is to compel the Production Credit System to pay its own way.
>
> The second fight is in the field of socialized credit—US Treasury disbursements under the guise of loans through the RACC, the Emergency Crop and Feed Loan office, and the Farm Security Administration. The least the Government should do is to consolidate these agencies, reduce expenses and costs, and lay down conditions for loans by act of Congress rather than to give administrators free rein to determine loaning policies. Then, set up simple machinery whereby the money may be provided by banks and other private credit agencies under an arrangement similar to Commodity Credit loans.

This letter astonished some local bankers who had seen FSA take farmers off relief, rebuild them economically and socially and turn them back to banks again as sound credit risks.

Now banks, which a few short years ago would not allow farmers to enter their doors, again were seeking farmer patronage—with all loan repayments guaranteed by the Government. The golden stream of money emanating from the war was running thick, and the banks wanted to divert the amber fluid into their own reservoirs. Unwilling to risk their funds on farmers' security, they wanted the Government to guarantee repayment of every penny with nice, fat interest to boot. Now that farmers were finding their way out of depression darkness, during which banks had foreclosed on their farms, dispossessed them in wholesale lots and turned them adrift, the banks wanted to cut themselves in on their new profits. The farmer, whom they had once bled almost to death, had blood in his veins again; and the leeches were again demanding the right to feed. Furthermore, they were seeking Government guarantees that the blood would be rich and red as the vital stream flowed into their parasitical proboscis.

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There was no news about the American Bankers Association demands. The ABA was too old and experienced in politics to advertise its objectives. Surely, the public would not support their position. But part of Congress would.

The Cooley (D-NC) Congressional Committee, appointed to investigate FSA, spent months junketing about the country examining the plight of the small farmer from such vantage

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points as the King Farm and various big business offices. Privately professing to be sympathetic to FSA but publicly blasting the agency for its "collectivist" projects (which FSA had acquired from the old Resettlement Administration and which cost about one per cent of FSA's funds), the Cooley Committee earned considerable publicity for its denunciations of the agency.

When the Cooley Committee first announced the legislation it had in mind for FSA, thoughtful people who knew what the American Bankers Association had in mind, wondered whether the name should be Cooley or Coolie. The Committee's recommendations would consolidate all Government agricultural lending agencies and make it mandatory for tenant farmers, sharecroppers and farm workers to secure Government-insured loans from commercial banks for the purchase of farms. This meant the end of FSA supervision, the end of medical care, a finish to cooperatives for small farmers. It would replace humanized credit with bank credit which had proved the undoing of so many farmers, and it would drive those ineligible for bank loans into the waiting arms of shylocks, commission merchants and sixty-percent-interest types of credit. The bankers' objectives were understandable. They knew it was feeding time.

But why should Edward A. O'Neal lend himself and his American Farm Bureau Federation to such treachery against the honest, hard-working, voiceless millions in America's back hills? There is only one answer.

Plantation owners throughout history have fared best where "wealth accumulates and men decay." For the dark ages are the golden era. They wanted vast estates, subservient and cheap labor, agricultural monopolies and rural serfdom. These halcyon days of depression could not be revived in a country where independent small farmers on their own land grow their own subsistence. The dispossessed and disinherited are docile. If America's character as a nation established on a foundation of small, independent farmers could be changed, big growers would have all the cheap, servile help they needed; and there would be an overflow of impoverished peons into the city to weaken organized labor there, drive down industrial wages, glut the ghettos. Add up O'Neal's successful political activities—his stand against subsidies and for inflation, his lobbying for measures to disorganize and tie the hands of labor by killing wage and hour legislation and supporting the Hobbs Bill and the Smith-Connally anti-strike Bill, his support of Public Law 45 which froze agricultural labor in non-essential cotton communities of the South while Northern farmers begged for relief, his constant calumnies against the Government of the United States during war, his sponsorship of draft-evading measures like the Tydings Amendment to deplete our armed forces, his incessant efforts to pit farmers against industrial labor, to divide the working people and make them fight among themselves, his weird relationships with powerful industrial interests. Add it all up, and what is the total? Fascism? Perhaps. In any event, it resembles something that millions of American boys are fighting against on foreign shores, something millions of patriotic Americans at home are sacrificing to overcome throughout the world.

The Vatican and Fascism

As seen by Salvemini and La Piana

Luigi Sturzo

WHEN I arrived in the United States and stopped a few months in Brooklyn (October-December, 1940), I received a visit from Professor Salvemini with whom I have been for more than twenty years on terms of friendship. I asked him jokingly why he had become so anti-clerical. I knew that he had not been too favorable to the Church, but I well remembered that he had been sympathetic towards the Italian Popular Party (founded by me in January, 1919), though quite caustic in certain cases and towards certain men, and that he had praised Benedict XV in the post-war period.

He replied that he had become anti-clerical in America where he had found a majority of Catholics and clergy favorable to fascism which he hated. This was one factor that had caused him to decide upon the hierarchy and the Vatican as the objective of his battle.

Salvemini may be defined as a paladin in search of duels: he enrolled in the Socialist Party and was a Deputy in the Italian Parliament; everyone in Italy remembers his lively battles with "companions." His campaign against Giolitti (Italian Prime Minister) and against the Giolittism of southern Italy became historical. Then, when

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war came, he was in favor of the oppressed nationalities, against Austria, and he fought against Italian neutrals and for Italian intervention in the war. Fascism has been for twenty-three years the objective of his battles, and, together with fascism, everyone who favored or might have favored it. In his new book[1] no one is spared: neither English nor American tories, neither Roosevelt nor Churchill, certainly not bishops and popes. And if the authors of "What to Do With Italy" spare this writer, it is not out of respect for friendship, but because they have always known him to be consistently anti-fascist in word and deed. If they had had a personal acquaintance with the people they attack in their book, including Pius XI, I think they would have been more moderate and more just.

No one, even though non-Catholic, who knew Pius XI personally would ever accept the polemical sentence with which Salvemini and La Piana introduce him in the book when on page 36 they write: "The last of them [sovereigns of Europe] was Pope Pius XI who in 1928 renounced all claims outside Vatican City and got in return seven hundred fifty million Italian lire in cash and one billion lire in Italian government bonds." It is impertinent and unjust to give the appearance of a "business bargain" to what was really the solution of the Roman Question. One might be of Professor Daniel Binchy's[2] opinion that it would have been better not to accept money from the Italian State; but no one can deny that the Holy See had the right to a financial compensation which even the Liberal Government offered to Pius IX in 1871, fixing the sum in the Law of Guarantees.

Salvemini and La Piana admit that Pius XI in dealing with fascist Italy had essentially religious aims and intentions, but they add "with due reservation" (p. 81) because, according to them, the Lateran agreements "had also a political content and political implications." The word *politics* should not lead us astray. The authors use it here in the sense of fascist politics; I take it in the sense of the public activity of a state; so that it was fascist in Italy, democratic in France, socialist or laborite in Australia, bolshevist in Russia. If a concordat takes on a political color, it derives, not from the Church, but from the contracting state, which, unfortunately, uses it to its own advantage. It is the history of all concordats.

Parenthetically, let the reader not be surprised if I choose to hint here at the possibility of a concordat even with Russia; was it not Pius XI who during the International Conference at Genoa in May, 1922, sent a delegation from the Vatican presided over by the Under Secretary of State, at that time Monsignor Pizzardo (now a Cardinal) to confer with the Soviet Foreign Commissar, at that time Chicherin?

The authors, in order to justify the *political implication* of which I have spoken, return again to the financial transaction of the Lateran Treaty, saying that "a considerable share of the income of the Vatican is dependent upon the state treasury of the fascist régime." With that statement it seems to me that the insinuation is made that because the Vatican receives from the Italian treasury an annual income of some eighty or one hundred millions, it thus has bound itself to the fascist régime which it would sustain from fear another régime (a republican one, for example) would suspend or annul this payment. But the Harvard historians should have remembered that the popes from 1871 to 1929 managed Vatican finances without this income and that the popes can well permit themselves the luxury of refusing payments conditioned by politics, as did Pius X when he preferred, in the case of France, to lose all properties and rentals of churches and religious organizations taken over by the State and valued at 600,000 million francs, rather than adopt the proposal of the Diocesan Associations which he thought harmful to the independence and liberty of the Church.

And if, perchance, Pius XI had been so little trustful in Providence as to cherish too dearly the Italian income, there might have been his successors to follow rather the example of Pius X.

But Pius XI was no less worthy than the man he loved and whose name he took. And it is strange that historians of the calibre of our authors, who linger to read between the lines of documents, do not study the psychology of the man with whom they are dealing. If there has ever been a pope who with his spontaneous outbursts and his innumerable discourses has revealed to the world his soul and all the phases of his thought and sentiments, it was, indeed, Pius XI.

Therefore, it is surprising to see the attempt to diminish the significance of the clear and constant denunciation by Pius XI of the anti-Semitic laws introduced into Italy. The authors cite on this point some articles from issues of *Civilta Cattolica* of 1936-38 on Semitism and Zionism which I have not read, but on which I should make some reservations, for what is related about them on pages 91-94. But if our authors, instead of citing material of doubtful suitability (thinking them to have been inspired by the Pope himself) had cited the exact words of Pius XI and had thrown light on the *political* (in the right sense of the word) position taken by the Pope, they would have seen that not only did he protest because of the violation of the concordat, but that he placed the Jewish problem in its universal setting.

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1. See "What to Do with Italy," by Gaetano Salvemini and George La Piana. Duell. $2.75.

2. "Church and State in Fascist Italy." Daniel A. Binchy. Oxford. $9.00.

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It is not my intention to over-color one point and lighten another; those who know me know, also—since it is evident in my books and studies published in several languages—that many times in political and other matters I have expressed opinions different from those attributed to Pius XI. But it seems to me a duty to caution readers against the journalism of the fascist period, when in Rome views were manipulated concerning the Vatican and bishops to be used and consumed by "régime" propaganda which was far cleverer than that of the O.W.I.

Wasn't the news spread, for instance, of my retirement to private life in 1923, so that it became accepted as historical truth? It was said that by order of the Pope I retired to Montecassino to do penance—for my political sins, of course. When the *Providence Journal* or the *Crociato* of Brooklyn, or the *Catholic Worker* of New York this very year wanted to praise me, they cited this luminous episode of my life. And perhaps Salvemini and La Piana would have cited it too, having found it in bound books on a library shelf, had they not known me.

What happened to Pius XI himself is more important to know (I had it from an eye witness in whom I had full trust who related it to me himself). The Pope had made a discourse clear in its allusions directed against fascism and in a very strong tone to about a hundred people. My friend told me that several of those present foresaw something more than a diplomatic incident. The next day there appeared in the *Osservatore Romano* quite a sugared edition of that discourse. The Pope scolded the Director of the paper who excused himself by saying that the editor present at the discourse (I know very well who it was) that day had a fever. The Pope in an irritated tone concluded: "Another time send an editor who hasn't a fever."

With regard to the many news stories reporting ecclesiastical declarations and acts in favor of fascism, what is lacking in Salvemini's and La Piana's book is precisely the examination of the source, the historical evaluation, and the psychological appraisal. I do not deny that there may have been such ecclesiastics in Italy and America but I can affirm (through the personal experience of some cases) that fascist propaganda often enlarged and colored them and sometimes invented them outright, as it did, for example, when it attributed to Cardinal Cerretti the declaration of having shown me the door in Paris when he was Nuncio there, instead of which, on the contrary, he received me cordially, remembering our long-standing friendship.

Have the authors ever reflected why it was that, at the time of the signing of the Lateran Treaty, there was not a single French, Swiss, Belgian, Dutch, or even German bishop (except in a few sporadic cases) who sang the praises of Mussolini; while, instead, there were several in America? The former were very near to Italy and understood what was happening there; nor is that the only reason: here, in America, there were some five million Italians subject to a fascist propaganda of exceptional intensity. The average Italian, scornfully called "Dago" with the addition of "Caporetto and Adua" thrown in his face, seeing Mussolini praised to the skies by the daily press, being granted loans from American banks, eulogized by diplomats and by prominent personages of the day, felt the equal of other Americans, indeed, the superior. The Italo-American priests received help and favors for their schools and churches. The bishops rejoiced. Then came the Lateran Treaty, the conciliation between Italy and the Church, Mussolini's stock soared. In Canada he was depicted on the walls of a church together with the saints and with Our Lady. Is this psychological state of persons far from the political and moral conflict of Italy of no importance for the historian? It is deplorable that the voices of Christian Democrats were not heard; that even Father Gillis, editor of the *Catholic World,* says he was criticized for his anti-fascist stand; so, likewise was THE COMMONWEAL, and others, too. One must needs conclude that it was difficult to make a critical voice heard in such a heated atmosphere. This is not the first case of the kind in America.

According to Salvemini and La Piana, Pius XI, in order to avoid the political exploitation that Mussolini would make out of it, should have refused the solution of the Roman Question. This writer had that same idea, too, in 1929, and he expounded it in an English periodical. But, when one thinks it over now, it must be agreed that the Roman Question was already ripe when Cardinal Gasparri treated the matter with the Liberal Prime Minister Orlando and Nitti (1919-20), and that a refusal by Pius XI to Mussolini would have been a hostile act, which others might have made, but which Pius XI could not make. From the time he had been named Pope, Pius XI had hoped to solve the question, and he had given quite a clear sign of it when he imparted his benediction to the people of Rome, for the first time since 1870, from the balcony overlooking the square of St. Peter's on the day of his election. When fascism took possession of the government (certainly no one can say that Pius XI favored the March on Rome) he had conceived the hope of being able to influence Mussolini and his crew to form a normal and civil government. For that reason, he counted upon the cooperation of Catholics with fascists and was disappointed when the members of the Popular Party declared such cooperation impossible, since liberty was lacking (Turin Congress, April, 1925).

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Finally, he placed as a condition for any solution whatsoever of the Roman Question, the stipulation of a concordat. It is known that Pius XI believed in the efficacy of the concordat; and after the one with Mussolini, he stipulated the one with Hitler. It was the epoch of appeasement, not only political but religious, too.

After all, it was this same Pius XI who became increasingly convinced that fascism, instead of becoming normal, was becoming a moral and political factor of corruption and wars; in his last years he kept repeating warnings against *exaggerated nationalism* (he couldn't say fascism without arriving at that break which he wanted to avoid at any cost), and against anti-Semitism and totalitarianism. His gesture when Hitler visited Rome is known (and what would he say now?). Finally, he prepared a discourse—a document to be delivered before the Italian bishops summoned to Rome—and it was said that with that discourse he intended to fix his position *vis-á-vis* fascism. The vigil of that day he died (February 10, 1939).

A good part of Salvemini's and LaPiana's criticisms go to Pius XII and to his attitude during the present war. Much has been written and will be written on this subject. Today when fascism has fallen (in spite of the "puppet" government of the Fascist Republic, captive of the Gestapo), today when Rome is occupied by the lansquenets, and the Pope can be considered a prisoner of war, the accusations of the two historians have been superseded by events.

The truth is that Pius XII, even with that diplomatic tact which differentiates him from his predecessor, never failed in his duties of *political* neutrality, although he can never be said to have been *morally* neutral. With his discourses, his peace points, and his paternal activity for the prisoners and victims of war, with his solicitude for the whole world, he has been above the conflict, although accepting, as it is clear, the moral implications of the war. It is for this reason that I agreed with President Roosevelt who proclaimed that the liberation of Rome and the Pope is a "crusade."

The Stage & Screen

Lovers and Friends

SOMEHOW or other, this Cornell-Wilson presentation seems to have the air of an expensive revival rather than of the entirely new production it is. And I imagine one good reason for this is that the Dodie Smith script turns out to be only slightly better Lonsdale than that author's own fulsome offering, "Another Love Story," one block to the north. Tailored to the drawing room, the play is peopled by a successful London attorney, his erstwhile actress wife, another girl, another man, and a friend and the theme is, of course, the salvation of a modern marriage mainly by chance. With one set, small cast, and long long parts, the formula is as shabby as it has always been, and provocative neither of interest nor reflection, nor, certainly, of any sort of stimulating review. As a vehicle for Miss Cornell, it gives us that lady gowned consecutively in good black, true blue, strong pink, and old orange, and it may be said that she has never looked more enchanting, nor has she ever been called upon to deliver less in the way of emotional or technical excitement. Among many scenes there are no moments, nothing to remember. I am afraid Miss Cornell's reputation is sadly coming to be that of the Actress-Manager who always, always plays safe before she plays anything else at all. As the erring husband, Raymond Massey turns in another of his graceful, articulately puzzled jobs; and Henry Daniel's agreeably deformed manner suits the part of the precise novelist exactly. Anne Burr's girl—she of the "freak white black bird quality"—is clear and unsubtle. Fortunate for all concerned, Carol Goodner's larger humors as the friend seem to lend what I can only call *dash* to the humdrum and for this I am quite properly, even deeply, grateful. And also to Katherine Hynes for her believably efficient maid. With the assistance of a most rich, exquisitely furnished, nostalgic Regent's Park setting by Motley, and Mr. McClintic's able direction therein, Miss Cornell has only achieved that small risk, that exercise in the obvious, that alphabet of clichés—the perfect matinée. *(At the Plymouth.)*

Carmen Jones

FROM THE moment that the asbestos rises to reveal a hugely expansive, shimmering, sultry Spanish shawl as inner curtain to Billy Rose's Negro version of the opera "Carmen," I think you are in for an impressive, entrancing, clamorous evening. And one not without its agitations since half in caricature, half in real, the production approaches at moments a use of the grotesque which, while endlessly fascinating, does not seem to me to be entirely legitimate. Except insofar as the grotesque is always legitimate as a means of recalling and revitalizing the original object. I think the discrepancy arises between the music and the show since Robert Russell Bennett's orchestral arrangements are entirely faithful to the original Bizet, while Oscar Hammerstein's lyrics veer back and forth between parody and passion according to the characters singing them at the moment. In this way, we have a Toreador ("Husky Miller" here) who is almost wholly travesty, a Micaela ("Cindy Lou") who is wholly pure, and a Don Jose ("Joe") whose sincere and tragic violence exactly reproduces the original character. And finally, we have a "Carmen" who most brilliantly assumes first one style and then the other. And following the variations through to the end, we have a series of ballets designed by Eugene Loring which are sheer caricature and a good bit too much of it at that; and a color scheme devised by the stage director, Hassard Short, which is neither fish,

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fowl, nor g.r.h. To enlarge on the latter physical detail, for some inexplicable reason, Mr. Short has imposed on his designers, Raoul Pène duBois and Howard Bay, a four-way color plan which quarters the show into yellow, pink, blue and red and which results, for example, in a large number of blue people in a blue scene with blue trees, and blue sky, and blue flats, and blue props. Now just possibly as *métier* for a revue, this system might do; however, approaching neither reality nor illusion, it has no relation to the libretto in question, and remains a department-store-display technique of small benefit to the theater. An annoying job. However, if this entire analysis leads you to believe that the production as a whole is a hodge-podge, at least it is a gigantic and intriguing one, and vocally and dramatically the players are a delight. It would seem to me impossible to discover a more inevitable "Carmen" than twenty-year-old Muriel Smith. Possessing the rare, un-modern emotional necessities of the rôle, passion and gallantry, she is physically superb and I thought her voice very fine indeed. In the part of "Cindy Lou," Carlotta Franzell's lovely voice and moving interpretation contributed perhaps the most purely operatic enjoyment of the evening; and Luther Saxon's "Joe," while less vocally satisfactory, measured up as a deeply-felt and equally moving job. Playing the prize-fighter, once the toreador, Glenn Bryant precisely looks the part and was stirring as well as amusing. All the singing struck me as excellent, the perfection of the diction unquestionably to be attributed to Robert Shaw's painstaking choral direction. In sum, I would put this down among the first on the list, not only because of its splendor but also because of its assorted invitations to controversy. The more talk, the more happens. And the more talk (yes, please), the sooner the theater as *experience* rather than *rehearsal* will come upon us again. In the meantime, cheers for Mr. Rose. *(At the Broadway.)*

Career Angel

THIS DEPARTMENT regrets the delay in its report on the current success being presented by the Blackfriar's Guild. I thought Gerard Murray's play concerning the bored Guardian Angel who so tenaciously rouses the Brother Founder of a boys' orphanage to achieve financial and neighborhood security for his school, entirely charming, although perhaps a little heavily affable in spots. The production directed by Dennis Gurney is more than competent; and Liam Dunn and Joseph Boley among the instructors, together with David Kelly, Eric Ladd and Jack O'Neill among the small fry, and David Carman Jones as the Angel Himself, are all especially noteworthy. *(At the Blackfriars' Theater, 320 West 57 Street.)*

KAPPO PHELAN.

In Mud We Die

SINCE wartimes seem to call for escapist pictures, a brittle adult comedy like *"No Time for Love"* might be just the answer. Its story is a variance on the Lady-and-the-Prizefighter or Lady-and-the-Cowboy theme (not to be confused with any Lady-and-the-Tiger finale which is strictly not Hollywood meat). This time it concerns a lady and a sandhog; and while none of these affairs, between ladies and commoners several rungs down the social ladder, can bear too close scrutiny, this screenplay has been written by Claude Binyon with such wit and directed by Mitchell Leisen in such high humor that it provides a series of good health-restoring laughs. Leisen's production is outstanding too, in cast, costumes and sets. The latter are effectively designed to heighten the contrast between the dark, unsavory, mud-filled tunnel (where the heroine photographer meets her smudged Adonis with muscles) and the "smart" rococo, white-icing decorated apartment (where the heroine resides, does her developing, celebrates with her decadent friends and where the sandhog busts in unlike angels fearing to tread). The well-chosen cast get completely into the spirit of the piece. Claudette Colbert, looking very sleek in gowns by Irene, conducts herself with correct amounts of defiance, independence and concern as the country's foremost woman photographer who rebels against shooting cheesecake for the picture mags, enjoys her assignment to get tunnel pictures, becomes baffled by her attachment to the Superman she finds under the river. As the big hunk of male, Fred MacMurray exhibits correct proportions of rippling muscles, contempt for society dames and curosity about the photographer's interest in him although he's certain from the beginning that she's on the prowl. We have every right to suspect as much from the delightful Daliesque dream sequence in which floating Colbert finds herself rescued by MacMurray garbed like Superman. In supporting rôles, Ilka Chase, Richard Haydn, Paul McGrath, June Havoc and miscellaneous portrayers of sandhogs and upper crust decadence help to make this comedy lively. One doesn't dare think too much about how this union between Colbert and MacMurray is going to work out; on this score, the story cheats a little bit anyway because we discover that Fred is not just a brainless bruiser when he turns inventor. But, the film aims to be a humorous study in pink icing and mud, and as such it succeeeds beautifully.

"What a Woman" is a diverting piece too. However its makers couldn't decide if they were doing a comedy or a serious satire. The film starts in a gay manner when a writer (Brian Aherne) on *"Knickerbocker"* magazine sets out to do a four-part profile on the "greatest ten percenter in the business." He soon discovers that this famous agent (Rosalind Russell) has been so busy putting over other people and things that she's had no time to make anything more out of herself than a fashionably dressed, extremely efficient career woman. In following the beautiful-but-cold agent to get material for his story, the amused writer watches her in the act of persuading a shy college professor (Willard Parker), who also happens to be a virile, handsome six-footer, into playing the leading rôle in a forthcoming motion picture production. We then see the transformation of the intelligent sensitive scholar into a "movie personality" and the transformation of the maker of personalities into a woman. Therese Lewis and Barry, who wrote this script, and Irving Cummings, who directed, saw fit to use an atmosphere of irony devoid of humor in this part of their story.

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The result is interesting but almost too intense for purpose of comedy. Everything swings around to a hilarious finish when true love raises its pretty head. The film's production is extremely good and while Mr. Cumming's direction is frequently slow, it succeeds in bringing out the cast's good points. Miss Russell, who is stunning in a series of stage and street costumes that would fill any girl with envy and man with admiration, Mr. Aherne, who spends a lot of time lighting a pipe, and Mr. Parker, who makes a very favorable impression in his first featured rôle, succeed in convincing you that these are real people. I wish they had been provided with some funnier lines. Or then again, the whole thing might have been handled in a straight, serious vein. A study of what happens to an intelligent person who is being hollywoodized could be first-rate material for cinema—that is, if the makers of such a film were honest.

Whether you like *"Girl Crazy"* depends on how much you like Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland. They bear most of the load and work pretty hard. Of course Producer Arthur Freed has gathered some other pleasant young people to carry on too and has arranged some nice out-door sets for the youngsters to carry on in. And then there are the music and lyrics by George and Ira Gershwin from the original musical comedy. Most of these deserve revival and merit billing as the film's major attraction. Fred F. Finklehoffe has changed the plot somewhat from the musical play that Guy Bolton and Jack McGowan wrote some years ago; for my money he could have changed it and speeded it up even more. We know that Rooney is going to get Garland (and vice versa) in the end, so why not hurry through all the puppy love and complications and concentrate on the Gershwin score? If you disregard the slow stretches in the story, you'll find plenty of entertainment. Mickey sings, clowns, does imitations, dances, plays the piano (with Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra in a new arrangement of "Fascinating Rhythm"), and overacts only every now and then. Judy looks pretty, dances and sings such swell Gershwin as "Embraceable You," "Biding My Time" and "I Got Rhythm."

The latter is done in a production number staged by Busby Berkeley, and is good in spite of the fact that it is bigger and longer than even such an excellent tune merits. The story is concerned with a junior playboy whose father is tired of having a son living in a world of week-end whimsy. So Papa yanks Junior out of Yale, sends him to Cody, a rather rugged school in the great open spaces which Junior finds quite unlike New York. The film's director, Norman Taurog, managed to get a nice fresh quality in some of the early song and dance numbers in the college. But the picture gets pretentious when Junior saves Cody from losing its charter; he does this trick by reaffirming the Hollywood tradition that all colleges exist mainly because of sports and extra-curricular high jinks. A big rodeo is what makes Cody famous. I suppose as long as no one takes this as a serious picture of American college life, it can't do too much harm. And the songs and dances *are* entertaining.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

THE WEEPING WOOD. *Vicki Baum. Doubleday.* $3.00.

RUSSIA AND POSTWAR EUROPE. *David J. Dallin. Yale.* $2.75.

Villain Rubber

THE MOST interesting thing about Vicki Baum's novel, "The Weeping Wood," is its form. What she has done is to make a romance—or rather a tragedy—out of raw material, that material, rubber, being the hero of her piece precisely in the same sense as Satan is the hero of Milton's "Paradise Lost"—a hero who is really a villain. Hers is a bold enterprise, and she comes off with it remarkably well. For it is no easy thing to hold a reader's interest through a series of episodes whose only connection lies in their all having something or other to do with rubber. It is not quite fair to say "only connection," since the author very skilfully uses casual blood relationships between characters in her various episodes as a subsidiary strand of unity.

Thus we first get the story of a missionary on the Amazon in the eighteenth century who has a beloved Indian boy to act as his faithful Man Friday—a boy particularly skilful in the primitive rubber craftsmanship traditional among Brazilian Indians. In a later episode a descendant of this lad is the noble and heroic wife of an exploited Brazilian rubber collector in the Amazonian jungle, and characters appearing in this episode reappear once more in an even later tale of a young American scientist (himself the son of an Akron magnate we have already met) who dies of fever in the same wilderness. The second episode in the book relates to the moral and financial collapse of a middle-class Bostonian as the result of a crash in rubber securities about the middle of the last century; this same drunkard's descendant turns out to be a brilliant young American chemist in the field of synthetic rubber during the present war. Such linkages constitute an interesting and perhaps necessary device; certainly no precisely similar use of blood relationships to secure unity occurs, to the best of our knowledge, in any other episodic novel.

The use of rubber as a hero is, of course, a peculiarly happy choice, for more than any other raw material, rubber is on our minds. Modern war needs rubber with an urgency almost unequalled, if only because rubber in quantity was produced in so concentrated an area of the globe's surface, and an area which rapidly fell to Japanese aggression—much to the discomfort of the United Nations and to the advantage of only one of their enemies. Rubber is still a primary headache for Germany and a very large headache for ourselves and England. All of this has vastly intensified both experimentation with synthetics and attempts at producing this essential gum in quantity in other portions of the world than those formerly monopolizing it as a crop. So there is a dramatic intensity to the story of rubber which would almost certainly be lacking in the story of any other raw material. Miss Baum has probably not opened the door to a new genre in fiction, even though she has done an original piece of work.

Some of the writing in "The Weeping Wood" is excellent—nervous and well articulated. Occasionally it drags a little, especially—and unfortunately—in the opening pages of the book. It seems scarcely necessary to add that Miss Baum is inclined to spice her narrative with sex a little more than some readers might like, and certainly the

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cruelty which she recounts—historically accurate as it is—makes many of her pages sad indeed. But she also includes the heroism of those who were driven by some strange urge to make this mysterious sap available for the benefit of our comfort.

Russia's Real War Aims

IT IS useful to regard the agreements reached at Moscow and Teheran in the light of the Kremlin's recent history. Of course the public has only the few announced principles of agreement to go on, but even these should be measured against the Soviets' basic foreign policies. That is the principal value of David J. Dallin's well-documented study, "Russia and Postwar Europe." It is a big help toward understanding the latest headlines and should continue to be for many months to come.

Without going back too far, for example, it is worth recalling that up to ten years ago Mr. Churchill and the Soviets could not denounce each other violently enough. This is more than merely a case of strange bed-fellows. What Britain and the United States have wanted is a Europe stable and serene about which we should not have to bother since no one power would be able to start things with any hope of success. Britain and the United States now seem to want some restoration of the *status quo,* while Russia looks upon the upheaval of this war as the greatest possible chance for revolutionary change throughout the continent.

These differences are manifest on specific points. The U. S. and Britain tend to favor an eastern federation extending from the Baltic to the Adriatic as a buffer between Russia and Western Europe (or failing in that, lesser federations); the Soviets wish to penetrate into these border lands and also to have a common frontier with Germany. We favor political democracy throughout Europe; Russia wants socialism. "Expansion through voluntary adhesion" to the USSR is contrary to our belief in self-determination. The Soviets apparently have little use for such familiar concepts as collective security, international police force, plebiscites and the like. Officially they have become convinced that in the last analysis Soviet Russia is secure only when there are no longer any non-socialist powers. Only then can she be sure that no one will attack her, only then can the world be assured permanent peace. In the meantime alliances and the like are mere temporary arrangements.

Witness the differences about Germany. The Soviets consistently courted the Reich down to 1934, and Stalin still feels that Germany is his naturally ally in spite of everything. Consequently he calls for a strong Germany after this war, with a strong army. Curiously he calls for a democratic Germany, but that is because the Gestapo has been so efficient in obliterating the German CP that there are at present no partisans to build on. Hence a democratic phase is needed there to hatch a new CP. One aspect of the question Mr. Dallin has left unresolved. The government inspired hate-Germany campaign has flared so high as to be out of control. Stalin has consistently distinguished between Hitler and the German people, but the ravaged Russian people, and more important still, the increasingly powerful Red Army does not make the distinction any more. Nothing would arouse greater resentment right now and probably for several years than an alliance with Germany.

Mr. Dallin sort of leaves this in the air, however, and emphasizes the disadvantages to Russia of such a course, which would include sponsoring partisan governments in the Balkans and a general expansionist, non-collaborationist policy. The only alternative for Russia is a wholehearted alliance with Britain and the United States, presumably as a step toward collective security. This would mean a sweeping reversal of what has been a highly consistent foreign policy for a régime which has held that individual ownership of "economic property is the source of all evil." It would mean giving up the assiduously cultivated illusion that all peoples really want to be liberated into the Soviet brand of socialism; it would mean curbing the most dazzling nationalistic and revolutionary though illusory ambitions. Do the United States and Great Britain offer enough, then, in the way of security and of permanent collaboration in a better ordering of the world, to bring about this *volte-face?* That is the question forcibly posed by David Dallin's highly informative book.

More Books of the Week

Report on India. T. A. Raman. Oxford. $2.50.
Subject India. H. N. Brailsford. Day. $2.50.

THESE two books deserve better than a notice. Raman, an Indian political observer and writer, gives an historical survey and analysis of India's relation to world affairs. Brailsford, a professional logician, has been for years an uncomfortably clear thinker and convincing writer on public matters. He has no doubt that, despite Winston Churchill's refusal to "preside over the liquidation of the British Empire," the Empire *has* disintegrated and must end as such; that the British Commonwealth of nations however, is a reality and the only practical solution not only of British evolution and our own, but of world peace. This point, of the Empire and the Commonwealth, should be but is not clear to Americans. Our "American Revolution" was a war of internal organization of the British Empire of which we thought ourselves to be the most important part. It was not at first a war for independence. It was fought by us to conserve and guarantee liberties we possessed already, which we would permit no one to violate or diminish. It was a domestic war to determine whether we should be organized as a unitary, centralized, authoritarian government from the top down, as subjects, or whether we should organize ourselves as citizens of free states in some sort of union or federation bound together in and through the crown: the difference between Empire and Commonwealth of free nations. Victory and defeat taught both us and the British only a partial lesson. For themselves, men of the same stock, Englishmen developed the pattern of conservators of personal liberty and world peace in a Commonwealth of nations, while as Empire they attempted to maintain mastery over non-British subject races. We, containing already the germ of the pattern within ourselves, proceeded to diminish it with ever-increasing emphasis and to reverse the principle for which we fought against imperialism in 1776, until, in 1865 we destroyed it and have moved ever since toward planned authoritarianism. No matter what the Liberal good intention of British rule of India may have contained, the result has been *rule,* against the growing will of the *ruled* (Brailsford in his chapter on "The Bureaucrats" is fair, clear, and exact on that score) and consequently, failure, dangerously complete in its effects on prosecution of the world war, peace, reconstruction and the evolution of human liberty. Both we and they have permitted the explosive injection of "color line" into the

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problem of "subject" versus "master" races. No greater danger could presently be conceived. It is not excessive to assert that this world war is, in its European aspect, a gigantic civil war. We all derive from the same roots. We have all passed through the same Hebrew-Christian religious concepts. We can understand each other, no matter how greatly we differ. Asia and Africa have no such common roots nor understanding with us. The "color line" is our making, not theirs. Whether we be fellow-citizens with them, subjects, or enemies, there is a growth of hostility between and among us so deep and wide that the non-European world war resolves visibly into world-wide rebellion of dark subject-races against white master-races, on top of Asiatic-African world-revolution with Japan as its spearhead. Brailsford is ruthlessly clear about that. We cannot take sides against British rule in India on that score, for we are both weakened by the same poison which neither of us knows how to treat.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

The Life of Ole Bull. Mortimer Smith. Princeton. $3.00.

OLE BULL and Sitting Bull were names I often heard mentioned in my childhood and, to tell the truth, they came to represent a confused picture of a blanketed warrior with a fiddle and a topper! Now, thanks to Mr. Smith, Ole Bull emerges as a distinct and picturesque personality, but I am doubtful if his picturesqueness rates a full biography. The fascination in the lives of great people is the development of their greatness. Ole Bull left off just where he had begun—a big, beautiful noise!

As a fiddler, he was apparently a "natural." At five he was taught to play by his uncle, an amateur cellist who later paid for professional lessons for Ole by the only two teachers Bergen (Norway) could provide; and this was the sum total of Ole's musical education. When his own arrogance met its match in the high ranking German violinist to whom he went for guidance, Ole decided from henceforth to trust to his own genius. In consequence, so pitifully little did he know about his own profession that he could never orchestrate his simplest compositions and young Grieg stood astounded at the famous musician's limitations. In 1834, when he was twenty-four, Ole Bull composed in Italy his Polacca and Sicilian concertos and his "Adagio Religioso" with its "Mother's Prayer," which was the last piece he ever played in public, at a benefit in Boston in 1880. "The Mountains of Norway" dates back to 1847, and from then on Ole's programs were repetitions of these compositions with current variations on local national anthems and songs, an occasional Mozart concerto and Paganini's "Carnival at Venice." When he was sixty-seven he tried at home to play over the "Kreutzer Sonata" with Liszt, but could no longer follow a score. It was the angelic sweetness of his tone, his phenomenal technique and his heroic presence which assured his world acclaim.

Ole Bull was really a troubadour born outside his century. Instead of castles, he knew the hotels of three continents. He also knew the ladies from the Czarina who gave him a jewel to the New England lady novelist who called him her "bulbul." The poor little French wife by whom he had six children was fortunate if she saw him for a month or two every three years. He had a special carriage built in England, with extra runners for the snows of Poland and Russia; he was familiar with most of the stagecoach and canalboat routes in America. Adventure he lapped up with a lusty Viking appetite and laughed as he knocked out a ruffian who attacked him

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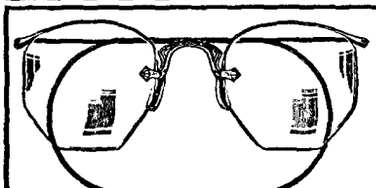

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with a bowie knife. At sixty, as a widower, he married an American girl of twenty, daughter of a lumber king of Madison, Wisconsin. Sara Thorp Bull suffered at first all the vicissitudes of marriage with a rover, but, chastened by old age, Ole Bull turned to domesticity and died in his island home on a fjord in his adored Norway. Incidentally it was he who made Ibsen the manager of the first Norwegian theater.

Mr. Smith has a lively style and good news sense; it is Ole Bull himself who defeats him. After reporting the first decade of concert tours, the rest is *da capo*. Using the finest violins to be found for his third-rate compositions, Ole Bull used the world as a frame for his romantic ego.

E. V. R. WYATT.

Garden Islands of the Great East. David Fairchild. Scribner. $3.75.

WE NEED refreshment to our belief in humanity such as you will find in this book. Thirty years the good doctor has spent with a heart of a fair child and the industry and simplicity of a scientist, introducing new plants into the United States. The expedition described in this book sailed and motored in a modernized Chinese junk through the Philippines to Celebes, Java, Bali and back by the Moluccas, just before Japan swooped down on this beauty and peace.

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Illustrated by delightful photographs by Edward Peckwith and the author.

EDWARD L. KEYES.

Taps for Private Tussie. Jesse Stuart. Dutton. $2.50. (*Illustrated by Thomas Benton,* $2.75.)

THIS is a prize winning novel; but it isn't really that good unless the standards of prize giving are getting lower. I do not mean to suggest that it is not a readable, and even humorous book. It is. But it is not the great novel about the South. My guess is that it may even go a long way to making some people angry. For Mr. Stuart has not written a novel of what used to be called "social significance." Here is none of the sinuous prose of a Faulkner containing, somewhere hidden, a message. Nor the starkness of a Caldwell to whom human beings have become so serious and sad that both he and they lose humanity.

About Jesse Stuart there is something Rabelaisian. He touches his people with pity and wonder; they are careless and innocent of responsibility; they consume huge quantities of food and drink when they can get it; they are unfamiliar with the Biblical text about earning your bread; their hands possess a variety of skills, but they refuse

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to atrophy those skills by work; they make love with passion and without thought; they are as inhibited as Gargantua. They are floated through life on huge, Homeric waves of laughter. They are as natural as sin; they do not know remorse; President Roosevelt is the ravens and, like Elijah, they are willing to be fed.

Mr. Stuart writes poetry. I do not mean any of this nonsense called "poetic prose." I mean that images drop from his pen with all the plenitude and splendor of the leaves at Vallombrosa. I mean that his eyes record the slenderest natural changes, and though the Tussies do not use it, even they are aware of the beauty and fertility of the deep, brown earth.

They story deals with a family which is living on relief. They object slightly to the arrangement since the government does not deliver the food to the door. Work is so far from their minds that it takes no residence, even as an idea. The death of Private Tussie means insurance. It means that their whole scale of living is changed beyond believing. Tussies from all parts of the state gather to eploit the new-made rich. Avid harpies, they remain to idle and consume until the wealth is gone. New relationships, strange, acid, jealous, greedy, animal, half obscene, come into being, form and reform and dissolve. They are a people who would have made Rousseau happy.

The story is told by a young boy. He is part of the family and has knowledge of their motives and their conduct. Such a technique has its advantages for a novelist. But many times I was uneasily aware that though the thoughts of the young are long, long thoughts, the understanding of motive and thought, and above all, the language of this boy, are Jesse Stuart's. And I could not engage in what Coleridge so beautifully called a willing suspension of disbelief. FRANCIS DOWNING.

In the Steps of Moses. Louis Golding. Jewish Publication Society of America. $2.50.

WHEN I read first the story of Moses in Father Knox's abridged Bible without all the geneologies, the laws, the offerings prescribed for making the tabernacle and its appurtenances and the descriptions of the vestments of the priests which interrupt that epic, I was breathless with the realization that there again was pictured the age-old problem of human freedom and responsibility, of leadership and dictatorship.

I had started study of the laws of the Old Testament some years before because of Peter Maurin's insistence on the teaching of the Fathers of Israel and the Fathers of the Church as being the basis for social reconstruction (the teaching on usury, the moratorium, and the Year of Jubilee, for instance). But one gets the story of Moses best in the Knox edition.

Louis Golding's book is a welcome addition to my knowledge of the Prophet and the places of his wandering. The story of Moses was familiar to Mr. Golding from the kitchen of his Jewish home at Doomington, England, years ago when his father traced the journey on a chart, framed in maple wood on the dark wall. The flavor of that background is all through the book, even in the awesome, rigid and foreign atmosphere of the Convent of Mt. Sinai where the travelers stayed during their time on that holy mountain.

The story begins in Egypt and Mr. Golding brings to bear on his account, not only his knowledge of the Bible, but of the Talmud, Jewish folklore and tradition. He searches for the birthplace of Moses near the Nile, he tells

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By M. V. WOODGATE

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This is a superior piece of work in every way. The devoted life of the foundress of the Sisters of Charity, that French noblewoman who followed the direction of St. Vincent de Paul and by whole-hearted application to the dirty work no one else thought to do became a Saint, is an edifying one, but it might have been prettified out of all reality. The present author, however, has given us not a panegyric but an objective, honest book, short, gracefully written, and learned in the historical background of the century of Richelieu, Mazarin and Sun King. —*The Columbia*

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of Joseph's account of the early life of Moses. He fought for Pharaoh in a war against Ethiopia, there gaining the experience which helped him in his campaigns against the foe on the way to the promised land. He married a Cushite (Ethiopian woman) "most devoutly believed by the Negroes of America who take great pride in the thought that the Lawgiver took himself a wife out of the black people." (I had never heard this before.) He tells of the crossing of the Red Sea, the journey to Sinai, and the long and weary journeyings in the wilderness.

In keeping up with the archeologists Mr. Golding is often too scholarly for the general reader. Whether Mt. Hor is at Jebel Harum or at Gebel Madra, and whether there is a similarity of names between Madra and Moseroth, or whether it is at Gebel Moweeilleh, some twelve and one-half miles north of Ain Kadeis—and whether Petra and Kadeshbarnea are the same place—these endless discussions become very wearisome and there are pages and pages of them.

But there are exciting accounts, too, of terrifying trips down mountain tracks that were "small waterfalls and shifting slithers of gravel"; there is the night in the two-room house of Sheikh Suleiman in Dana: wife, ten children, goats, chickens and calves in one room and the guests in the other; the banquet on the mountain side on a ledge looking over an abyss, where they all ate with their hands, from a caldron, of boiled mutten, rice and sour milk. These are unforgettable pictures left with you. Both for those who love travel books and for those who love the Bible this book is of deep interest. DOROTHY DAY.

A Book of Unlikely Saints. Margaret T. Monro. Longmans, $2.50.

"NO SAINTS are really likely. But some are unlikelier than others." Among the "unlikelier" ones, the author includes Aloysius Gonzaga, Benedict Joseph Labre, Rose of Lima, Gemma Galgani and Thérèse of Lisieux. Her accounts of these holy persons are partly biographical, partly interpretative. She is fascinated by Christian asceticism, and is at her happiest when describing it: "the body is good, but not the highest good; therefore it should be handled in the interests of something higher than itself." The principal value of the book is in its fresh and original approach; it is not scholarly, and is frankly based on easily available biographies. It is unfortunate that the accuracy of certain statements, not all bearing on hagiology, was not questioned before going to press. And the style, as in the author's "Seeking for Trouble," is scarcely decorous enough for the subject matter; since the volume is not entitled "Saints in Slang," why write of a potential saint's being permitted to "slop about at home"?

CONTRIBUTORS

Georges BERNANOS, author of "Star of Satan," "Diary of a Country Priest," "A Diary for Our Times" and other books, is now living in Brazil.

Rural OBSERVER is the pen name of a student of agricultural affairs and close observer of the FSA.

Don Luigi STURZO, founder of the Italian Popular Party, is the author of "Church and State," "The True Life," and other books.

William Franklin SANDS spent many years in the Diplomatic Service of the United States.

E. V. R. WYATT is drama critic for *The Catholic World* and a frequent contributor of articles and reviews to THE COMMONWEAL.

Dorothy DAY, one of the founders of the Catholic Worker, is now working on a life of Peter Maurin.

Francis DOWNING is assistant Educational Director of the UAW in Detroit.

Edward L. KEYES is one of the founders of THE COMMONWEAL.

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